

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 SCCT-01 /059 W

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R 060750Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8921

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

CINCPAC

CONFIDENTIAL MANILA 14357

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, RP

SUBJECT: MARCOS PREDICTS MINDANAO PEACE IN OUR TIME

BEGIN SUMMARY: IN WIDELY PUBLICIZED REMARKS BEFORE MULTINATIONAL CORPORATION EXECUTIVES ON DEC 5 PRESIDENT MARCOS PREDICTED EARLY SOLUTION TO MUSLIM REBELLION THANKS TO NEGOTIATIONS AIDED BY INDONESIANS AND MALAYSIANS. HIS REMARKS CLEARLY PART OF ONGOING PR EFFORT AND ALTHOUGH REBELLION IS IN SOMETHING OF A LULL AT THE MOMENT (REASONS FOR WHICH NOT ALTHOGETHER CLEAR) IT COULD EASILY FLARE AGAIN TO HIGH LEVELS OF VIOLENCE. END SUMMARY.

1. MANILA PRESS GAVE UNIFORM HEAVY PLAY TO MARCOS PREDICTION BEFORE "BUSINESS INTERNATIONAL" GROUP ON DEC 5 THAT THERE WILL BE AN EARLY SOLUTION TO THE "MUSLIM PROBLEM" IN MINDANAO AND SULU. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION FROM AUDIENCE, PRESIDENT RECOUNTED PROGRESS MADE SINCE MARCH WHEN SEVERAL MINDANAO TOWNS WERE UNDER REBEL CONTROL. HE SAID GOP IS NOW ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH REBEL

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LEADERS AND THAT MALAYSIAN AND INDONESIAN CHIEF EXECUTIVES

ARE HELPING THIS EFFORT. PRESS QUOTES MARCOS AS SAYING,
"IT IS MY FEELING THAT WITH PRESIDENT SUHARTO HELPING OUT
AND MALAYSIA COOPERATING, WE SHOUOLD BE ABLE TO SETTLE THIS
VERY SOON." AS ADDITIONAL FACTORS IN RECENT PROGRESS TOWARD
SOLUTION PRESIDENT CITED "FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE" CREATED BY
KUALA LUMPUR CONFERENCE LAST JUNE AND VISITS TO
MANILA BY ITS SECRETARY GENERAL AL TOHAMY, WHO PRESIDENT
SAID HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH INDONESIANS AND MALAYSIANS AS
WELL AS WITH REBELS. (AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN PRESENT CONFIRMS
THAT PRESS COVERAGE OF MARCOS REMARKS WAS ACCURATE.)

2. COMMENT : ALTHOUGH HEADLINES UNUSUALLY LARGE, MARCOS
REMARKS DID NOT DIFFER IN SUBJSTANCE FROM PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT
FORECASTS OF EARLY SUCCESS IN COPING WITH MUSLIM REBELLION.
HIS WIDELY PUBLICIZED RESPONSE TO QUERY ON STATUS OF THE
REBELLION IS AN OBVIOUS ATTEMPT TO REASSURE MULTINATIONAL
MAGNATES (AND PHILIPPINE PUBLIC) THAT REBELLION PRESENTS NO
SERIOUS THREAT TO STABILITIY (OR INVESTMENT). STATEMENT CER-
TAINLY CANNOT BE TAKEN AS FRANK ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION.

3. AT PRESENT MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VARIES FROM
AREA TO AREA BUT REBELLION IS NOT YET OVER OR EVEN IN
DEFINITE DECLINING PHASE. THE LANAQ POVICES ARE FAIRLY
QUIET (AS USUAL) BUT FIGHTING CONTINUES IN COTABATO. (LAST
MAJOR ACTION IN COTABATO WAS DAY-LONG REBLE SEIZURE OF
CARMEN ON NOV 15 BUT AMBUSHES AND OTHER INCIDENTS CONTINUE.)
FOR THE MOMENT, SULU SEEMS TO BE AT SOMETHING APPROACHING
ITS NORMAL LEVEL OF ENDEMIC VIOLENCE (WHICH IS HIGH).

4. ALL THIS ADDS UP TO PARTIAL LULL CAUSE OF WHICH IS NOT
ALTHOGETHER CLEAR. GOP HAS CERTAINLY MADE NO PERCEPTIBLE
PROGRESS IN FORMULATING ANSWERS TO MUSLIM SOCIO-ECONOMIC
GRIEVANCE, SUCH AS LAND PROBLEM. WE SUSPECT BASIC REASON
IS THAT MANY REBELS (AWARE OF AL TOHAMY PROMOTION OF MNLF
GOALS)ARE RESTING AND REGROUPING, AND MAY BE TO SOME EXTENT
PREOCCUPIED WITH ACTIVITIES OF THE PILGRIMAGE SEASON.
RELATIVE LACK OF MILITARY INITIATIVE FROM GOVERNMENT SIDE
ALSO A MAJOR CAUSE OF LULL. CURVE OF VIOLENCE COULD EASILY
TURN UPWARDS AGAIN FAST, AND GOP CONTROL OVER SITUATION IS
ESSENTIALLY NO BETTER THAN BEFORE. ARNOLD
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